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The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

No. 275.

JUNE, 1930.

TRUTH — LIBERTY — RELIGION.

“God is a Spirit : and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”

—John 4 : 24.

CONTENTS :

Editorial.	Front Page.	The League of Youth.	71
This Education Bill, by Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.	67	Assemblies, by Ullin.	72
Annual Meetings of General Synod	68	The Gathering at Dunmurry, by Rev. J. A. Kelly.	73
“You Christians !”—A Brahman's Analysis of Christianity	89	Reports, etc.	76

Editorial.

Centenary Celebrations.

In the last issue we ventured to suggest that the Remonstrant Synod Centenary should receive more adequate recognition than an afternoon service in one of our country churches. There was nothing startling or unique in the suggestion ; it sprang naturally from the common knowledge of the importance of the occasion and the interest it would be expected to arouse among Non-Subscribers in particular and the outside public in general. Unfortunately our fears were only too well grounded. To quote from the “Whig” report, “Many were unable to gain admission to the quaint little Presbyterian First Church, Dunmurry, where the centenary of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster was celebrated yesterday afternoon.” No good will be served by pursuing the matter further—*post factum nullum consilium*—but it is to be hoped that the next important event in connection with our Church will be dealt with on a scale large enough to enable all interested persons, Non-Subscribers and others, to participate.

The Service.

Those who were fortunate enough to obtain admission to the church, having taking the precaution of arriving long before the advertised time for starting, found the service inspiring and the address worthy of the occasion. Mr. Gordon's historical retrospect of the Remonstrant Synod was followed with interest and his intimate references to some of the founders were most illuminating. Particularly impressive was his graceful tribute to Dr. Cooke, the con-

troversial opponent of Dr. Montgomery. “We are blind to the significance of the whole struggle,” said Mr. Gordon, “if we do not see that each of these two great men was doing his best in what he conceived to be the true interest of the denomination which he served and adorned.” This is the kind of Christian charity we expect from Mr. Gordon and Non-Subscribers will be grateful to him for including it in his address.

In response to several inquiries, Mr. Gordon has kindly consented to write out his address for publication in the next issue of the NON-SUBSCRIBER.

Trenchant Criticism.

On another page will be found a critical article on the Education Bill (Northern Ireland) by the Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A. The criticism he offers is certainly trenchant enough but it is both logical and constructive, as close study will reveal. Most of the criticism appearing in the press and religious periodicals is obviously made from denominational or political standpoints and must therefore be suspected of party bias. Mr. Cross criticises from an undenominational and non-political point of view and for this reason, if for no other, his findings are of more than usual interest. They will not be accepted by those in authority ; of this we may be certain. The educational and religious atmosphere of Northern Ireland would at present kill them before they reached maturity but perhaps the day will come.....? In any case it is refreshing to find one of our ministers speaking fearlessly and openly on a controversial subject which is either avoided or else attacked under cover of party, by the “safety-first” partizans.

Belfast and American Unitarians.

A short time ago three of our Belfast congregations passed a resolution of sympathy in connection with the death of ex-President Taft and directed that a copy of the resolution, which appeared in the local press, should be forwarded to Dr. L. C. Cornish, President of the American Unitarian Association. In a letter to one of our ministers, Dr. Cornish says, "I want to express to you our deep appreciation of the resolution passed upon the death of our distinguished layman, ex-President Taft, and to thank you for sending it to me. I shall report it to our Board of Trustees, and perhaps of more importance I shall send it to Dr. Pierce of Washington, and ask him at a convenient time to give it to Mrs. Taft." We have since learned that the resolution, above the signatures of the three ministers, appeared in a recent issue of "The Christian Register." Such gestures do much to cement the affectionate relationship existing between Liberal Christians on both sides of the Atlantic.

Dean Inge's Latest.

"The Christian heaven and hell," says Dean Inge "like all other speculations about the future life, are picture-book theology. We may, in my opinion, be reasonably certain that we have our part in the eternal world; but the details are imaginary, which does not mean that they are untrue, but that they are poetry, not science. Poetry is the natural language of devotion and in this field no other language is available." This is all very true but we wonder what would be said if a Unitarian or Non-Subscriber publicly described the Christian heaven and hell as "picture-book theology." Needless to say, this is the Dean's way of protesting against grossly materialistic conceptions in the realm of Christianity, and the reminder is badly needed. However we much prefer the same conceptions expressed in other words at the Remonstrant Synod Centenary service by one of our own leaders. Said Mr. Gordon, "If we are going to banish from religion vision, prophecy and poetry it means that we are, in effect, flinging the Sermon on the Mount into the waste-paper basket."

A Unitarian Chapel Pageant.

In connection with the Josiah Wedgwood bicentenary, the oldest Nonconformist chapel in North Staffordshire, The Old Meeting, Newcastle-under-Lyme, is having a pageant of its own on May 28th and June 4th. Its celebrations also include special services on Sunday, May 25th, with the Rev. Dr. Gow, of Manchester College, Oxford, as preacher. Josiah Wedgwood was a leading member and warm supporter of The Old Meeting, and his family pew could be identified there till about forty years ago. The congregation have a Communion Cup (dated 1721), a table, and box which are said to have been his. He owed much to the friendship of William Willett, its minister, a man of wide culture and remarkable scientific knowledge, the bond being further strengthened by the marriage in 1754 of his sister with this gifted divine.

It is not surprising that Josiah Wedgwood, progressive in industry, arts and crafts, and science, zealous in social and political reform, should be allied with pioneers of religious freedom. His mother was the daughter of Josiah Stringer, minister of Allostock Chapel, Knutsford (now Unitarian). His greatest friends were among the Unitarians or people of that liberal religious trend, such as Dr. Aikin and Mrs. Barbauld, of Warrington Academy, the precursor of Manchester College, Oxford; Benjamin Franklin, the American statesman and scientist; Dr. Priestley, the discoverer of oxygen; and Dr. Erasmus Darwin, the poet and scientist, a neighbour whose still more distinguished grandson Charles, married one of Josiah Wedgwood's daughters. ("Manchester Guardian," 22nd May, 1930.)

Of the nine busts that have just been unveiled in America's Hall of Fame, to accompany the names already inscribed there, six are of great American Unitarians: John Quincy Adams, President of the United States; Horace Mann, educator, father of the American public school system; George Bancroft and John Lothrop Motley, historians; James Russell Lowell, poet; and Joseph Story, Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States.—"The Inquirer," May 24, 1930.

This Education Bill.

Its Effect on Education and Ulster.

BY THE REV. R. NICOL CROSS, M.A.

The Executive of the United Education Committee of the Protestant Churches in Northern Ireland two months ago publicly declared that "if the clergy, who are specially charged to look after the moral and spiritual welfare of the people entrusted to their care, fail at a time of far-reaching educational change to show interest and give the best guidance in their power to their people, they would be guilty of the gravest dereliction of duty."

What has the ministry of our own Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church done to discharge this important duty to its people, what interest have we, as a Church with definite principles, shown in the Bill which vitally concerns the future of education in our Province? It is understood we have a small Committee which was appointed to deal with educational issues, but it has never been convened. The sum of what has been done is embedded in a resolution on undenominational Bible teaching passed by the General Purposes Committee of the Church.

That is good so far as it goes, but the patent and deplorable fact is that our Church and ministry generally are either indifferent, or are so immersed in parochial duties of more or less triviality and moment that they have no time or energy left for reflection upon the larger policies of thought and action by which the national mind and character are to be shaped. If our Church is to be worthy to count for anything in the counsels that direct the community and determine its general well-being, the demands of congregations on their ministers will have to undergo some modification so that the vital functions will be concentrated less in the feet and more in the head. Modern life has reached the stage of development when a Church must produce statesmen as well as shepherds, thinkers as well as pastors, or it will sink into impotence and insignificance.

Dynamic of Education.

In its effect upon the mentality and character of a free people there is to-day no more potent or persuasive force than education, for all children come for years

under its organised and disciplined influence. It is of paramount importance that the national education should be the best possible, inspired by the finest and most enlightened ideals, informed by the truest culture, and conducted by the best and ablest men and women as teachers.

It is generally admitted that the old system of small sectarian schools, while it had a glorious part to play in the past and was not without its points, has become in modern times antiquated and inefficient; it has become obstructive of, and antagonistic to, a really national system in which alone the highest potentialities of modern education can be attained.

Small ill-equipped schools badly built for sectarian ends and with a sectarian control may fill the citizens of the state with particular theological dogmas, and all the petty and derisive prejudices and bigotry they notoriously foster, but they *fail religiously*, because they subordinate and obscure the central and commanding basic ethical principles of essential religion, those fundamental spiritual ideals which alone are vital to the highest kind of character and common citizenship; and they *fail educationally* because they are too small to bring the full resources of education into play in the children's interest, and they limit the teaching profession as a career with some attraction for the ablest young personalities, seeking spheres of service equal to their powers.

Sectarian Pressure.

The Government which, under the pressure of ecclesiastical interests and vocal denominational jealousies, turns its coat and passes a Bill which will bolster up with public money denominational schools, and paralyse the movement for the transfer of these into a public system, has surrendered its own deepest convictions, struck a blow at educational ideals, and betrayed the best interests of the Province.

Of this we believe the Northern Government to be guilty in its decision to give grants up to 50 per cent. towards the building of new sectarian schools and the reconstruction of old. It is not zeal for education, or even for *religious* education, but zeal for denominationalism and ecclesiasticism, a very different thing, which is the hidden hand that has brought about this critical change in Government policy. It constitutes a state subsidy to a bankrupt

inefficient school system, an uneconomical system, wasteful of man-power and money-power, at the expense of the true educational interest of the children and at a cost of some hundreds of thousands of pounds sterling to the state.

Bible and Denominationalism.

We believe in religion, we believe in the Bible itself as a great spiritual and cultural instrument in our civilisation, and it ought to be taught in our schools by teachers who know it in a trained and systematic way, as the teacher of any other subject or classic is expected to know it, not as a mere store-house of propagandist texts for a score of conflicting and vital sects. We believe denominationalism to be alike the ruin of religion and the Bible, and the corruption of education and its higher ends.

Incidentally this Bill as now amended by the Government will tend to bolt the door that was beginning to open to a fair opportunity for young people in our own Non-Subscribing Church who would take up teaching as a career in a public system where character, ability, and definite scholastic qualifications should alone count. Such injustice however is the least, the most limited though none the less regrettable, of these evils which this Bill, as now presented, will do to the general cultural, intellectual moral and religious development of Ulster, in a world amid whose larger and nobler activities and causes, the small considerations on which sects and their preoccupations feed and thrive, are without either regard or significance.

Suggested Solutions.

It may be said that the only logical solution of the religious difficulty is, either to banish the Bible from the schools, adopting the "secular" idea, or to endow all the denominational schools alike, Protestant and Roman Catholic, so as to bring them up to modern requirements, in structure and equipment.

Our position is, that the latter alternative ought, by inherent principle, to carry a measure of public control, which the Roman hierarchy stubbornly resists. All that matters must be in the hands of the priests, absolutely. With them it is church first and all the time. Then let the church pay the piper as it calls the tune. The so-called "souls" of its children will not suffer. And as what is sauce for the goose, should be sauce for the gander, let

it be even so with the Protestant schools, which will not transfer, or object to the "Four and Two Committees." But for the provided and transferred schools, under the State system, it does seem possible, as they are Protestant, to continue the practice here and elsewhere, of giving "Bible-teaching," as indeed the teachers are willing to do, leaving its character to the general progress of religious enlightenment in the community. For admittedly we cannot escape the "personal equation" in the teaching. And that can only be got at through the spread of culture and better religious ideas in Church and community.

Anyhow, all who believe in the "saving power" of education for Ulster, even religiously, must regret this new endowment of Denominationalism.

The Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

ANNUAL MEETINGS OF GENERAL SYNOD.

TUESDAY and WEDNESDAY, 17th and 18th JUNE.

Tuesday 17th June, in Central Hall.

Annual Meeting of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster at 4-30 p.m. Tea will be served from 5-30 to 7-30.

Annual Lecture by the Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A., at 8 p.m. Subject—"The History of the Principles of Subscription during the last 100 years." Collection on behalf of the Incidental Expenses Fund.

Wednesday, 18th June.

Divine Service in First Presbyterian Church at 10 o'clock, followed by Communion Service, both conducted by the Rev. J. Glynne Davies, Moderator. Collection.

At 11 o'clock in the Central Hall, the meeting of General Synod will commence.

Meetings and Lecture are open to all members of our churches. It is hoped there will be large and representative attendances.

The Manager of the Magazine will esteem it a favour if all accounts due to JUNE, 1930, can be paid to him before the end of that month.

He acknowledges with thanks the Annual Donation of £2 from the Committee of the First Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, on behalf of the Subsidy Fund.

"You Christians!"

A BRAHMAN'S ANALYSIS OF CHRISTIANITY.

[The following article has been received indirectly from India. Readers will no doubt find it interesting. To "See ourselves as other see us" is extremely illuminating.—Editor, Non-Sub.]

As previously arranged, I camped one Sunday near the village of my old friend Rai Bahadur—a retired Sessions Judge. The "Lala Ji" as he was called a Brahman, was a graduate of an English University, and had been an efficient judge. He was a student of religions, and his subordinates regarded him as a "holy man." His friends respected him but were inclined to keep aloof, owing to uncertainty regarding his advanced views.

When together in the same station we made it a practice to meet on occasional Sundays for open discussions, the first of which arose from the merits of a local case, and led to our subsequent friendship. A Brahman subordinate had by extortions from the villagers misappropriated some £2,000. The police inquiry was carried out with difficulty, as pressure was put on the villagers to suppress evidence. Finally the accused Brahman was fined and sentenced to two years' rigorous imprisonment.

Scathing Criticism.

The appeal lay to Lala Ji and it was an open secret that he was the recipient of many letters from fellow-Brahmans imploring his clemency; but he stood firm and merely altered the imprisonment from "rigorous" to "simple." The judge of the Higher Court was, however, persuaded into believing that the "distress suffered by a Brahman" during the trial was adequate punishment and the sentence was reduced to four months' imprisonment. This decision drew forth scathing criticism from Lala Ji on the inference that Brahmins were entitled to preference in the eye of the law.

On the occasion of this meeting, I found him seated on the ground in an open verandah in the courtyard of his house. On a desk before him lay an open edition of the "Upanishads" and among his books was a vernacular copy of the New Testament. He offered me a chair but I removed my shoes and chose to sit on a cushion near him.

Interest in Christianity.

His prevailing expression was one of calm. An ascetic by habit, his religion was

his life, and nothing disturbed his abiding gentleness and courtesy of manner. My object was to obtain his final opinion on the future of Christianity. "When did I first become interested in Christianity, Sahib?" he asked. "At Oberammergau, and you will remember I wrote to you from that place and told you how I was moved to tears by those Passion Plays. On my return to India I made a study of the New Testament, passages from which are now read to my grandchildren.

"That boy Durga Pershad yonder," pointing to a lad reading under the shadow of a bullock cart, "is well acquainted with the parables of Jesus, and their meaning. My conclusions are that, firstly, the record cannot be regarded as history and some passages are admittedly corrupt interpolations, and secondly, we must reject all that is supernatural. Jesus himself, never claimed a special birth, nor made himself out to be other than human, though He felt the Divine spirit within Him. Such legends are associated with many spiritual teachers of early times, Buddha, for instance.

Sympathetic Spirituality.

"Jesus is the greatest of a series of spiritual revealers, who stand out in history like Himalayan summits, and whose messages have so far been vouchsafed to the children of men. It has been given to these men to draw inspiration from the spiritual world and it is even conceivable that their influences continue in and about us. There would seem to be a chain of sympathetic spirituality linking the one to the other. Jesus had probably never heard of either Buddha or Socrates, yet there is continuity of thought with both of these predecessors. Revelation has continued, but in other forms, and it is conceivable that, when mankind is fit for it, we shall receive some impression of that vague immaterial future.

"Christianity is in no way specially favoured by God. The revelations of Jesus, Buddha or those contained in our "Upanishads" are from the same spiritual source. There can be only one Divine Spirit. Recently, one of your missionaries quite politely told me I was "a Heathen." In the sense conveyed by him this was untrue. Jesus spoke the language of symbolism, but the Western mind does not so easily respond to symbolism as does the Eastern.

Suffered from Materialism.

"Christianity has suffered from materialism. Those words, for instance, "Ou

Father in Heaven," are generally interpreted to mean that God or Brahm, the Almighty Spirit, is the father, more especially of the Christians, though indeed this was not the thought of Jesus. The term "Father" is apt to be taken literally, and to convey parental care of the individual together with moral qualities of love, justice, mercy, which are to me inconceivable. The universe is controlled by unaltering law and it is incredible that the Almighty should be constantly interfering with the action of his laws by special preferences.

"Heaven, too, is apparently 'a place' to which good Christians are 'to go' instead of a condition of spirituality attainable by the Soul in which there can be neither sex, nor material recognition. Jesus himself implied this in the words 'neither marry nor give in marriage but *are as the Angels*.' I accept, perhaps, the possibility of 'spiritual recognition' where there has been 'spiritual communion.' My brother, Harkishn, and I were always in spiritual contact and our thoughts responded mutually. I might send him a quotation from the 'Upanishads,' or he to me, a book, actions which we found after to be the result of mutual thoughts. I may hereafter be in touch with Harkishn, but those around me now, children and grandchildren, dear though they be, must pass finally out of my life. It was ordained that I should beget them, but the link is only material.

Man's Abiding Happiness.

"I remember hearing a sermon in one of your London churches in which the preacher said, 'In the matter of eschatology the West is centuries behind the East,' and I agreed. Later, referring to the possibility of a future for dumb animals, he expressed the hope that one of his dumb friends, a dog, might be with him in 'the fields of Paradise.' I thought, 'My good friend, you are indeed centuries behind us!'

"The preacher, a scholar and a man of broad vision either consciously or not had conveyed to his hearers the impression of a heavenly place where something of the nature of material life with social reunions, was to be lived again by the good Christian, perhaps comforting but to me incredible. Then again there is that mythical day of Judgment, and the reward for the good deed, forgetting the saying of that wise Egyptian, 'Who seeks the good life for what it offers, seeks not the good life.' Man's abiding happiness is not in getting, but in

giving. This great principle is insisted on both by Buddha and Jesus.

"You Christians have not yet realised the meaning of the teaching of Jesus. You have tolerated religious wars, persecutions, burnings at the stake, all 'in the name of Jesus.' The conflict is now of churches and creeds. You have yet to escape from sacerdotalism, the control of the priesthood, and their insistence on these human creeds and dogmas, even, I understand, to the use of prayers and incantations towards the spiritualising of matter.

Jesus' Message.

"Jesus was no founder of dogmas or maker of creeds. Men did not become His disciples by believing this or that thing, but by faith in, and love for, Him. If He were to return among us, He would not recognise as His disciples those who associate His message with a code of complex doctrines, but rather those who endeavour to live His life in principle, and carry out His work. The future of Christianity rests with your Protestants. I was much attracted by the simple service of your Scottish church, the directness of the prayers adapted to the needs of the day, and a remarkable address on the subject of our discussion, 'The Future of Christianity.' Such a service seemed to me to be a true expression of the Founder's teaching.

"Neither priest nor creed can help man on his journey into the unknown in search of the revelation of himself, his Soul; nor can there be surrender of private judgment. The individual must find himself, and by his own efforts. No man can find his Soul for him, and it is 'the life' that counts."

Man's Objective.

Then, touching my arm, the Lala gently said, "Do not think I under-value the lives of the many saintly priests which Christianity has produced. I merely think your priests are mistaken and are not adjusting themselves to the needs of the age." Crossing his hands and looking before him, he continued, "One life cannot suffice for this realisation which must be attained gradually by the discipline of time. Man's objective is to be one with Brahma, to reach infinite perfection." This even is our interpretation of the words of Jesus, "I and my Father are one," the equivalent of the Christian conception, that of Mystical communion with the Creator.

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"Again, 'Be lost altogether in Brahma, like an arrow that has completely penetrated its target. A surrender accompanied by devotion, goodness, and love."

Revelation of Jesus.

"Indeed, we must become Brahma and thus realise the highest perfection that there is Even so, the difference between Brahma and our individual soul is obvious as is the difference between the silent river and the great ocean into which it flows

After a pause he resumed. "But, Sahib, we are discussing Christianity, not the 'Upanishads,' and I admit these are speculations on conditions in regard to which neither you, nor I," and with a smile, "nor your Priests know anything charm they you ever so wisely. We look dimly into the glass. When we are fit to know, we shall be told. Buddha refused to consider the question, and said, 'It makes neither for things needful to salvation, nor for that which concerns a holy life.'"

Then, turning to me and speaking with emphasis, "But Sahib, we make no mistake about the revelation of Jesus. You Christians have yet to fulfil it, containing as it does the most profound truths, coupled with a simplicity to be understood by the little child. Christianity has yet to find itself and properly interpret the mystical philosophy of that fourth Gospel."

A Wider Vision.

When you Christians abandon ceremonies and doctrines which stifle religion under the mark of protection, and put into practice that simple life indicated by the unsurpassable sermon on the Mount and act on those matchless sayings such as 'Do unto others,' or 'Render unto Cæsar,' believe me, you will attract the greater part of mankind to the banner of the Galilean."

Two well-bred Ravi cows "driven" by a girl of about six with a palm leaf at this moment came lowing into the yard, and made for their calves tied up in the corner, and I realised it was nearing sunset. I bade farewell to my philosophic friend

and left with him a copy of the Gospels in chronological and continuous form which I knew he desired.

If it be no disqualification to reject the Gospels as history, or to consider the supernatural passages as legend; if it count for aught to accept Jesus as the greatest of spiritual revealers, and His message as eternal truth; if it be a credit even to endeavour to live "the good life" as contemplated by that message, Lala Ji might well be regarded as a Christian. But he himself has a wider vision and possibly would say, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, Christian nor Hindu. We are all pilgrims on the same quest, the realisation of our Soul, the attainment of infinite perfection, and of Oneness with Brahma."

The League of Youth.

An Announcement.

First I want to congratulate those who have written me. Some day they will be proud for being the first members of the League.

From the correspondence I learn that the one and only rule I had the temerity to make has met with disfavour. Very well, I cancel it. It was the age limit. Know then, all ye who are interested that there is no age limit. No one is more pleased than myself. I consider it was a real unselfish, nearly sacrificial, act of mine to name a figure, because I thus barred myself from membership. I do not want the calendar to compute age. It is too arbitrary. What matters it that I was born in the year . . . ; that is a matter solely for legal purposes (for making entries in Baptism Registers and on Marriage Licences and the like). Really, I do not believe I was ever born, or shall ever die. So that's that.

We shall write no more about the League this month save to tell readers that one suggestion received will be adopted. I am going to get into touch with each Church (through Secretaries and Ministers) and in that way obtain more members.

Then a meeting will be called. But you need not wait to hear from your minister or Church Committee, I would like to hear from you personally and at once.

P. GODDING,

The Manse,

Banbridge.

19th May, 1930.

Assemblies.

BY ULLIN.

"Wise words by the masters of assemblies, given from one shepherd!" Is this a prophecy of Moderators' sermons? Well, we will take it as such, and think of the first General Assembly of the Christian Church, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, and they were all with one accord in one place." The Moderator, or as some would say, the Bishop, Peter, hadn't as yet taken the chair. (Some say his successor still occupies the chair, permanently, of the whole Church, and if you won't accept his ruling, you are in schism). However, the meeting hadn't started. They had all been shaking hands, and saluting one another with a holy kiss (customs have changed). See how these Christians love one another! Was there ever afterwards, such an harmonious meeting? And just in the few moments of silence, there came down upon them, suddenly, the tremendous rush of power,

psychics among them may have seen it like "lightning standing still" abiding on each of them. That was the most valuable part of the meeting. There were great speeches made under its influence; the Church's manifesto was proclaimed—"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God." The speeches were only the expressions of the inspiration of the Assembly, the main thing was the inspiration. Emerson said, the part of the service he liked best, was when the congregation was sitting, quiet, before the minister came in. (No reflection on the minister). But, it has always been considered in the great ceremonies of the Church, that the Holy Ghost comes in the silence; the culmination is always in silence.

It seems doubtful if what is commonly considered "Sabellianism" was actually the teaching of Sabellius. It is rather difficult to get hold of his idea. His different "personifications" seemed to flash out in succession like coloured lights from the revolving lamp of a Light-ship. From

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meets in the CENTRAL HALL, ROSEMARY
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month, October to May, inclusive.

OBJECTS (inter alia).

To encourage laymen to take a more active
part in the work of the Churches.

To form a bond of union and closer co-
operation between the members of the
various congregations.

The Committee invite those who are not
already members to join. The minimum
subscription is 2/6, and further particulars
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MR. J. H. GILLILAND,

35 Rosemary St., Belfast, Hon. Sec.,

MR. J. EDMONDSON, Jr., Asst. Hon Sec.

19 Lime Street, Belfast.

eternity the Deity was a "silent God"; at creation He became "the speaking God," or Logos; after the Old Testament Dispensation He returned in the character of "the Son," and having accomplished the Gospel Dispensation of redemption and salvation, He withdrew again, to return as "the Holy Ghost," and "at the end of all things will finally resume for ever, His monad state." This, Sabellius called "evolution" and "convolution." It was a fellow countryman of his, Arius, a generation or two later, whose name and doctrine is so deeply impressed on our churches in Ulster, who started the Trinitarian controversy, which is still going strong. But the term "Silent God" is interesting and suggestive, that before God Himself speaks, He keeps silence. "Be still and know that I am God."

While the "gathering of the clans" is taking place in "the assembly of the elders," every elder who comes, as well as every minister, is a "fragment of his congregation," he is a "stone" of "the rock" on which the Church is built, and as such he may be very "hard-headed," let us hope not "hard-hearted," that he has a heart of flesh and not of stone. What did early Christians do, in making the sign of the cross? They made a threefold dedication, by touching head, and heart, and shoulders, the organs of activity. Clear heads, warm hearts, willing hands. (By the way, Hindus make a similar sign, only they begin with the top of the head, then touch the brow, the heart and the shoulders. Strange!)

The Communion Service of the Synod then, whatever the attendance, becomes the "sacramentum" of the whole Church, in and through our representatives, dedicating "ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a holy and continual sacrifice."

Thus the Synod, which is our Assembly, should be above all, an opportunity for attracting and diffusing inspiration and life for the succeeding Church's year, and every representative should return to his own Meeting House with the sacred flame carefully guarded, to radiate strength and love.

N.B.—Editorial Communications should be sent to the Rev. S. P. Whitehouse, 19 Wellington Park Avenue, Belfast.

Phone—Malone 378.

Contributions must be in the Editor's hands not later than the 20th of the month.

The Gathering at Dunmurry.

BY THE REV. J. A. KELLY.

Sunday, 25th May, 1930, was a great day for the Remonstrant Synod for on that same date 100 years ago the said Synod was born. To celebrate worthily that event a monster congregation assembled at the Church where the great leader of the Remonstrants, Rev. Dr. Henry Montgomery, ministered for 56 years. It was his first and only Church, where he was ordained on the 14th (not 24th) September, 1809, in his 21st year.

The weather was fine, the glory of advanced spring was lavishly displayed and these added much to the impressiveness of the event. The ancient Church proved much too small to contain all who sought admission. It was packed in every part, ground floors, galleries, isles and even pulpit steps by 700 people, and the balance fully 300, were earnest enough to remain outside and join in singing of the hymns, which, in order were (1) "We Come unto our Father's God"; (2) "O God, our help in Ages Past"; (3) "I'm not ashamed to own my Lord"; and (4) "Pour Blessed Gospel, glorious news for Man."

The organist, Mr. Albert Taylor, L.R.A.M., A.R.C.M., and choir did their duty well, as did also the soloists, Miss V. E. Curran, L.R.A.M., and Mr. J. A. Laird; and last, but not least, the Rev. Alex. Gordon, M.A., conducted impressively the service, and delivered an able address suitable to the

The Inquirer and Christian Life.

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occasion. It may be said in passing that numerous expressions of admiration were passed at the wonderful signs of vitality, both physical and mental, manifested by the preacher, now almost 89.

It was announced that the collection would be used for expenses incurred and for the repair fund of the Church property, about £200 in all required, towards which £40 10s. was taken. It was also announced that tea would be provided for all who could wait, and to this invitation 600 responded.

After the collection, the Rev. J. A. Kelly, minister of the congregation since 1896, read a letter from Rev. James Kennedy, senior minister of Larne and Kilwaughter, as follows:—

“Larne Manse,

23rd May, 1930.

“Dear Mr. Kelly,

“I have been confined to my room since early in January, so to join in your meeting in honour of the *best friend* I ever had is an utter impossibility.

A namesake of my own, James Kennedy Boyd, will be present and lay a wreath, on my behalf, on Dr. Montgomery's last resting-place.

I am the only minister living who, as a student enjoyed the priceless assistance of our ‘Great Doctor’ as Professor. His students went to Dunmurry on Saturdays. At first, he received us in his study, but later, owing to his increasing agony and weakness, he received us in his bedroom. Of course he did not give us formal lectures, but mutual conversation took place which was reminiscent of Milton who speaks of our Lord ‘as Second only to thee,’ when charged with denying ‘the Lord who bought him,’ he stood up at a great Public Meeting of the General Synod and recited ‘Jesus, My Lord I know His Name.’

Dr. Cooke was present at Dr. Montgomery's funeral, and some one remarked: “There go the two Henrys of Presbyterianism.”

It may be noted that quite a number of wreaths, besides Mr. Kennedy's, were laid on the tomb of Dr. Montgomery. The burying place close to Dr. Montgomery's was not forgotten, being that of Walter Roberts, of Collin, who was one of the first

Elders to join the Remonstrant Synod. And further, as the 25th May, 1930, was the 35th Anniversary of the death of the Rev. T. H. M. Scott, M.A., one was deposited on his grave in the name of the congregation. Mr. Scott was the immediate successor of Dr. Montgomery, and began his ministry in Dunmurry in January, 1866, he was a devoted servant of his loved Master, and died in harness in the 30th year of his faithful ministry in Dunmurry. Like Mr. Kennedy, he too was a student under Dr. Montgomery.

For a Sharing of God's Will.

Father, we pray thee for the settled purpose and the single mind,
Which come from the subordination of our wills to thine.

We pray thee for so complete a harmony of purpose with thyself
That conflict may never for one moment arise;
But that, knowing instinctively what is thy way,
We may embark upon it joyfully, of our own free will
(However lonely and barren the prospect),
Not because it is thy way for us,
But because we ourselves desire it with wills that are thy will.

We pray thee for the complete self-surrender,
Which is in itself perfect self-fulfilment,
Because our will, becoming thine,
Is gloriously clothed upon with eternal liberty,
Bearing lordship with thee over the stars in their courses,
Yet rejoicing to serve as a slave
The lowliest of thy little ones.

Father, whose will we thus crave for our own,
Give us thy steadfast fortitude of purpose;
Give us thy keen insight into motive and issue,
So that we may distinguish unerringly
The lower from the higher sequence of action:
Give us thy never-flagging zeal of loving sacrifice'
Give us thy utter disregard of result or reward

Amc 1

AN INDIAN COLLEGE PRAYER.

DO NOT FORGET the Sunday School Conference at Hollywood on Saturday, 7th June; and the Annual Meetings of General Synod on Tuesday and Wednesday, 17th and 18th June.

The Principle of Non-Subscription

The centenary of the Remonstrant Synod of Ulster (founded 25th May, 1830), provides a suitable occasion for declaring adherence to the principle of non-subscription.

Since Presbyterianism took its rise in Ireland in the first half of the 17th century it has passed through two great religious crises. The New Light movement early in the 18th century and the Arian controversies in the early half of the 19th century were really due to revolts against the orthodox creeds and confessions.

From the second crisis came the Non-Subscribing Church, a Church without creeds, in which a man could worship God in spirit and in truth without first having to give assent to a man-made creed.

The Non-Subscribing Church of Ireland is a relatively small Church but it has exercised an influence in Ireland, and particularly in Ulster, out of all proportion to its size.

Influence in Ulster.

The history of Ulster during the last hundred years, and particularly an account of the developments in the educational and social spheres, would be sadly incomplete without frequent and emphatic reference to Non-Subscribers both clerical and lay.

The spirit of religious freedom which led the original Non-Subscribers to face social and religious ostracism rather than play the traitor to conscience, has made its liberalising influence felt in the educational, social, political and economic spheres of this Province and has done much to free the human mind from the dead shackles of custom and tradition.

The Non-Subscribing Church of Ireland has every reason to be proud of its history and every reason to look forward to the future with confidence. Its work is not finished; it has a distinctive contribution to make in the realm of religion, a contribution which other Christian Churches, by reason of their constitutions, are unable to make.

Ultimate Authority in Religion.

The Non-Subscribing Church holds that the final and ultimate authority is God's Holy Spirit within and that when this Spirit comes into conflict with creeds,

dogmas and confessions, the outer authorities have to be discarded.

Paradoxical though it may sound, the vast majority of Non-Subscribing Christians are outside the Non-Subscribing Church. Every Christian who subscribes to a creed or confession with mental reservations, is in actual fact a Non-Subscribing Christian. In other words, every Non-Subscriber can accept all the creeds and confessions with mental reservations, just as the majority of enlightened Christians accept them, but in the interests of religious truth and honesty he will not do this. He believes that the only honest and straightforward course open for a Christian who cannot accept the creeds and confessions as they stand is to refuse to subscribe to them.

What would we think of a business man who signed a contract with the mental reservation that he would please himself how far he kept the terms of the contract?

Christ or Creeds?

One of the chief reasons for the existence of sectarian Christianity with its various denominational churches demanding the acceptance of various creeds and confessions, is that Christians are putting loyalty to some denominational Church before loyalty to Christ. Christ never asked his followers to subscribe to some cut-and-dried theological formula and the church that bears his name has no right to do it. Indeed the more closely we follow Christ the more inclined we shall be to clear away the creedal accretions that have clustered round Christ's teaching.

The religion that was good enough for Christ—the Love of God and love to man—should be good enough for us. It is futile for the Church to try to improve on the teaching of Christ by adding creeds and confessions of faith. The Church can no more do this than it can paint the rainbow or gild the lily.

The Non-Subscribing Church stands for the divine right of private judgment in religion and is honest enough to say so. It holds that the alternative, namely the accepting of a formulated statement of belief with mental reservations is, to say the least of it, hardly the correct attitude for a follower of Christ who seeks to worship God in spirit and in truth.

S. P. W.

Unitarians in the Province.

We have been informed from a reliable source that in the last Census for the six counties, 7,890 returned themselves as Unitarians. The Belfast figure was 1,739. We would be strengthened if all of them put themselves on our Church Rolls as well. It is an interesting speculation what the figures would be if we had a census of Unitarians who do not declare themselves as such. Mr. Augustine Birrell, the noted literateur, once said that in England there were far more Unitarians outside than inside our Churches. Unitarianism apparently is in the air, but it would be much more effective if it materialised. We should like to hold communion with those discarnate spirits.—From the "First Church, Belfast, Calendar, for May, 1930.

Correspondence.

[Letters to the Editor are welcomed. They should be written in good taste, as brief as possible and duly authenticated. No letter will be inserted without the writer's name.]

Dear Mr. Editor—I would like to express my deep appreciation of your Editorial notes (in the May issue) re the "Remonstrant Synod Centenary," and our "Church and Public Questions." It is really distressing to see how indifferent we seem to be to matters affecting our churches. There is a grand opportunity at present to point out to members of other denominations, and to our own people—especially, the younger sections—what we stand for, and why we stand apart from the (so called) orthodox churches. The orthodox (or subscribing) Presbyterians do not allow any opportunity to go past them unused, of making known to everybody by means of the illustrations in the daily papers, what is going on in their churches. Particular care seems to be taken by them to illustrate installations or ordinations of ministers, and in every case of the opening or reopening of buildings in connection with any of their organisations or of meetings held, etc. We believe our organisations and their doings to be very important surely, but strangely enough we do not seem to think of any but very little consequence to let the public know what we are doing. We do not even keep our own members fully informed of our movements, and to do this should, and would be a great means of encouragement and of awakening a deeper interest in the objects and results of which we wish to make sure.

While I am writing may I be permitted to compliment our Rev. T. H. Ewbank, B.A., B.D., on the very forceful address he has given to the readers of the NON-SUBSCRIBING PRESBYTERIAN" of May, on "Sudden Conversion?" Pity it is that we could not distribute 100,000 copies of his deliverance, or that the address could not be broadcast by him or one of our Ministers at 7-55 p.m. some Sunday on the wireless.

Yours, etc.,

ALEXR. A. ASHWORTH.

Obituary.

Mrs. Dorcas Jane M'Cullen, Ballee, Co. Down.

The remains of the deceased lady, who died on the 10th of May, aged 76, were interred in Ballee graveyard, with every token of respect and sympathy. She was one of those quiet unobtrusive members of our Church who do not crave publicity, but who, with the other members of the family, richly deserve the esteem which our Church for three generations past has carried towards them. Any community of worshippers is honoured in its fellowship by members of this type. If all Unitarians loved their religion as she loved and served hers, the world would be more impressed by their witness for the faith that is in them. For almost a century the deceased's father, and son, Mr. Robert M'Cullen, C.E., have rendered voluntary praise service, and the latter has done yeoman work for many years as Church Treasurer.

Reports.

Hollywood.—The Children's Annual Flower Service was held on Sunday morning, May 4th, and was conducted by Mrs. J. H. Ewbank, whose services were much appreciated by all. There was a good attendance both of Sunday school scholars and adults. The flowers were sent to the Children's Hospital, Belfast. The young people's collection for the Sunday School Cot in the hospital amounted to £1 10s. 0d.

Mountpottinger.—The newly installed electric light was switched on at the Evening Service on May 4th, when a good congregation was present. The very marked improvement will be greatly appreciated by those who attend the evening services. It is satisfactory to note that the necessary

money for the complete installation has been raised without drawing on the Church funds. The Committee desire to thank those who acted as special collectors and those who, being unable to attend, sent donations towards the collection, thus bringing the special fund up to the required figure. The thanks of the congregation are due to the members of the sub-Committee who gave so much of their time, and in particular to Mr. H. Beattie who acted as Secretary of the fund. In connection with the Mountpottinger Sunday School, a Children's Guild has been inaugurated and up to the present, the results have been quite gratifying and encouraging. The Guild is following the line of work set out by the Band of Mercy, i.e., kindness to animals. Considering some of the crude ideas which are still held in the world to-day,

with regard to this subject, it is very necessary that children be trained at an early age, to treat all animals with kindness and consideration. The League is under the able leadership of Miss K. Forrest, who is full of enthusiasm and very anxious to enrol as many members as possible to help on this useful and humane work. On May 2nd an open meeting was held when Rev. J. H. Ewbank presented certificates of membership to almost twenty members. Songs and recitations were given by the children and a few games were indulged in before the proceedings were brought to a close.

DEATH.

SNODDY.—Saturday, 26th April, 1930, Jane Snoddy (née Craig), at the residence of her husband Robert Snoddy of Ballywillin, Cairncastle.

Congregations of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland.

Belfast.—First Church, Rosemary Street, 11-30 and 7, Rev. R. Nicol Cross, M.A.
 „ All Souls', Elmwood Avenue, 11-30 and 7, Rev. Sydney P. Whitehouse.
 „ Mountpottinger Unitarian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. J. H. Ewbank, B.A., B.D.
 „ York Street Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 11-30 and 7, Rev. A. L. Agnew, B.A.
Dublin.—Unitarian Church, Stephen's Green, 12 and 7, Rev. E. Savell Hicks, M.A.
Antrim.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. George V. Crook.
Ballee.—Presbyterian Meeting House, 11-30 a.m., Rev. Joseph H. Bibby.
Ballycarry.—Presbyterian Old Meeting House, 12 noon, and 7 p.m. occasional Sundays. Rev. William G. Marsden.
Ballyclare.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. A. M. Bell, B.A.
Ballyhemlin.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. John Barron.
Ballymoney.—The Remonstrant Meeting House, 12-15 p.m., Rev. Felix Holt, B.A.
Banbridge.—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.
Cairncastle.—Old Meeting House. 12-15 p.m., Rev. Eustace Thompson.
Clough.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Meeting House, 11-30 a.m.—Rev. J. Shaw Brown.
Comber.—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6-30 (October to April), Rev. J. Glynn Davies.
Cork.—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, and 7 p.m., Rev. W. A. Weatherall.
Crumlin.—The Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Evening Service monthly, 7-15, Rev. G. Price-Jones.
Downpatrick.—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m., Supply.

Dromore.—Unitarian Church, 12 noon and 6 p.m., Rev. Alfred Davison.
Dunmurry.—First Presbyterian Non-Subscribing Church, 1 noon, Rev. John A. Kelly.
Glenarm.—Old Presbyterian Meeting House, 12 noon, Rev. J. A. Miskimmin, B.A.
Greyabbey.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon (6 p.m. November to February), Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.
Holywood.—First Presbyterian Church, 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. Edgar Lockett.
Killinchy.—Remonstrant Presbyterian Church, 12-15 p.m., and 7 p.m., occasional Sundays, Rev. David J. Williams.
Larne.—Old Presbyterian Church (Unitarian), 11-30 a.m. and 7 p.m., Rev. James Kennedy and Rev. John Begg.
Moir.—First Presbyterian Church, 3-15 p.m., Rev. Percival Godding.
Moneyrea.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church 12 o'clock noon.—Rev. J. Dare Davies.
Newry.—First Presbyterian Church, 12 noon and 7 p.m. (October to May), Rev. G. J. Slipper.
Newtownards.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 3-30 p.m., Rev. W. H. T. Tilson, M.A.
Rademon.—First Kilmore Remonstrant Church, 12-15 p.m., Rev. John J. Magill, B.A.
Raloo.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. John McCleery.
Templepatrick.—Old Presbyterian Church, 12 noon, Rev. Alfred Turner.
Ravara.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church. 3-30 p.m., last Sunday in month, Rev. J. Dare Davies.
Warrenpoint.—Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church.—Services fortnightly, October to May, at 3-30 p.m.—Rev. G. J. Slipper.

Will Ministers and Church Secretaries please advise the Editor of any mistakes in the above details.

Ulster Unitarian Christian Association.

Hon. Secretary—REV. G. J. SLIPPER, 7 TREVOR HILL, NEWRY.

CENTENARY YEAR

OF

Remonstrant Synod.

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